

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 2853

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1(DECONTROL 1995)
TAGS: PFOR PINT LE IR
SUBJ: IRANIAN ASSISTANCE FOR LEBANON AND RELATED
QUESTIONS

REF: STATE 070467, 76 TEHRAN 12693(NOTAL)

1. CHARGE AND ADCM HAD A LONG DISCUSSION WITH LEBANESE AMB KHALIK AL-KHALIL SHORTLY BEFORE RECEIPT OF STATE REFTEL. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF KHALIL'S INITIATIVE IN ARRANGING THIS DISCUSSION WAS TO PRESS HIS THESIS THAT THE SYRAINS ARE INSTALLING THEMSELVES IN A MORE PERMANENT FASHION IN LEBANON. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE ACTIVITY OF SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE, OF SYRIAN INSTRUMENTS SUCH AS THE "PALESTINIAN" SAIGA IN ATTEMPTING TO SUPPLANT ARAFAT, AND OF EFFORTS TO INSTALL A BA'ATHIST PARTY APPARATUS IN LEBANON. KHALIL MADE NO EFFORT TO HID THE FACT THAT HIS SYMPATHIES LIE WITH THE VIEWS OF RIGHT WING CHRISTIANS (HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED HIS CLOSE CONTACTS WITH FORMER PRES FRANGIE), AND INDEED WE HAVE SEEN ARGUMENTS IDENTICAL TO THOSE HE PUT FORTH ATTRIBUTED TO RIGHT WING SPOKESMEN SUCH AS BECHIR GEMAYEL
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IN OTHER CHANNELS.

2. KHALIL MADE ABSOLUTELY NO REFERNNCE TO IRANIAN ASSISTANCE FOR LEBANESE SHI'ITES, EVEN THOUGH HE IS ONE HIMSELF, AND MUC OF THE DISCUSSION RANGED OVER CURRENT SHI'ITE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE SYRIAN-BACKED GOL AND SYRIAN INSTRUMENTS SUCH AS (ACCORDING TO KHALIL) IMAN

MUSA SADR. WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ABOUT IRANIAN PLANS TO ASSIST THE SHI'ITES.

3. DEPT WILL RECALL FROM TEHRAN REFTEL THAT KHALIL APPROACHED GOI WITH AN OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR IRANIAN ASSISTANCE TO REARM AND REHABILITATE LEBANON'S SECURITY FORCE LAST DECEMBER. HE WAS TURNED DOWN, AND CONFIDED TO CHARGE (THEN DCM) THAT HE HAD FOLLOWED THESE INSTRUCTIONS AGAINST HIS BETTER JUDGEMENT, BELIEVING IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO SEEK ONLY ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM IRAN AND SATISFY LEBANON'S MILITARY NEEDS ELSEWHERE. THIS COULD SUGGEST KHALIL WOULD BE A WILLING CONVEYOR OF ANY NEW INSTRUCTIONS TO SEEK HUMANITARIAN AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR SHI'ITE AREAS OF LEBANON, EVEN THOUGH DANY CHAMOUN INDICATED SOME OTHER CHANNEL MAY BE USED (DEPT REFTEL).

4. WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT WITH THE IRANIANS (OR KHALIL), BUT WOULD EXPECT FOLLOWING FACTORS TO BE AMONG THOSE WIGHED BY IRANIANS IN REACTION TO SUCH REQUESTS: (A) IRAN'S PRESENT SHORTAGE OF FUNDS FOR EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE; (B) AN IRANIAN DESIRE NOT TO TURN AWAY SHI'ITES EMPTY-HANDED; (C) IRANIAN CONCERN LEST ASSISTANCE TO ONE SEGMENT OF LEBANON'S COMMUNITY BE VIEWED BY OTHER FRIENDLY SEGMENTS (I.E., RIGHTIST CHRISTIANS) AS MANIPULATIVE OR INTERVENTIONIST; AND (D) MANNER IN WHICH REQUEST IS PUT TO GOI, WHITH PROBABILITY USG SUPPORT FOR REQUEST WOULD HELP CONSIDERABLY.

5. WE NOTE, INCIDENTALLY, THAT KHALIL TOLD US IN CONFIDENTIAL

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DECEMBER HE WAS AWAITING SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO DISCUSS SOUTHERN LEBANON WITH ISRAELI REPS IN TEHRAN (TEHRAN REFTEL). THIS SUBJECT HAS NEVER COME UP AGAIN IN OUR CONTACT EITHER WITH KHALIL OR WITH THE UNOFFICIAL ISRAELI EMB HERE, THOUGH WE NOTE SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY SUCH CONTACTS MIGHT HAVE TAKEN PLACE.

6. FINALLY, IN HIS MOST RECENT MEETING WITH CHARGE, KHALIL MADE A POINT OF MENTIONING HE KNOWS VICTOR KHOURY, THE NEW COS OF THE LEBANESE ARMY, INTIMATELY. KHALIL CHARACTERIZES KHOURY AS A NICE GUY, BUT NO ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF.
MIKLOS

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